in comprehensive manner with the help of the State Government in order to work out a time bound action programme; and

(b) if so, by when this study project is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (MUFTI MOHD. SAYEED): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(b) Does not arise.

Sale of U S dollars by RBI to authorised Dealers

1419. SHRI B. SATYANARAYAN REDDY: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under consideration of Reserve Bank to commence sale of US dollars to authorised dealers for transactions; and

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and what are the details regarding the working of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI JANARDHAN POOJARI): (a) and (b) At present RBI only spot Pound Sterling to the authorised dealers. Since a large portion of India's trade payment is handled in US Dollers, authorised dealers have to obtain US Dollars for making payments against Pound Sterling acquired from RBI. This process at times can result in loss on accounts of conversion. The Reserve Bank of India is, therefore, considering a proposal for sale of US Dollars to the authorised dealers for transactions denominated in US Dollers only. The question of working out the details of the scheme would arise only after a final decsion is taken by the RBI about the introduction of the scheme.

Child labour in beedi industry

1420. SHRIMATI RATAN KUMARI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of child labour engaged in the beedi industry in the country as at present;

(b) what steps Government have taken or propose to take to check the employment of child labour in beedi industry and to ensure health and welfare of the child labour already engaged in this industry;

(c) whether it is a fact that contract labour is also prevalent in beedi industry in the country; and

(d) if so, what are the details thereof and what action Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) As estimated by the Ministry of Labour the number of beedi workers in the country is approximately 32.75 lakhs out of which approximately 1 per cent are children.

(b) The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1976 provides that no child below the age of 14 years shall be required or allowed to work in an industrial premises. The Act, however, does not bar children working as home workers.

The Employment of Children Act, 1938, prohibits the employment of children below 14 years in beedi making industry except where such work is carried on by the occupier with the aid of his family only.

As children are not permitted to work in the beedi industry except as part of the family work, no provision has been made relating to their health and welfare.

(c) Yes, Sir.